

validating the worst instincts of the anti-police agitators.

The president of the Minneapolis City Council called on her colleagues to “imagine a future without police.” And sure enough, in Los Angeles, police were told to make do after a cut of \$150 million. In Seattle, the police department budget shrank by nearly 20 percent. Defunding efforts here in Washington were passed by committee unanimously.

The Biden administration has amplified these efforts by appointing avowed supporters of defunding the police, like Vanita Gupta and Kristen Clarke, to high-ranking positions at the Justice Department, the Agency charged with enforcing Federal criminal law.

Now, we didn't have to imagine the consequences of betraying the brave officers charged with keeping the peace. Millions of Americans have been living this dangerous new reality literally for months. Last year closed with the Nation's sharpest 1-year increase in homicides in decades. In New York City, the murder rate jumped nearly 45 percent, and in my hometown of Louisville, it is already on pace this year to exceed last year's all-time record.

New fears arose in communities across the country, and as Democrats flirted with their imagined future without police, Americans did exactly what you would expect of a free people: They looked to their own defense and exercised their Second Amendment rights in record numbers. The FBI processed nearly 40 million background checks on gun purchasers last year, shattering previous records. And, nationwide, 40 percent of the guns sold last year were purchased by—listen to this—first-time buyers. In particular, members of racial minority groups joined the ranks of gun owners in record numbers.

So let's review. In city after city, powerful Democrats vocally refused to uphold their responsibilities to protect public safety. Violent crime filled the void. Against this backdrop, the American people chose to defend themselves by exercising a core constitutional right.

But now, as Democrats at the State and local level play politics with public safety, Democrats here in Washington want to make gun ownership in America more burdensome than ever. Prominent voices on the left, including some of our colleagues, fanned the flames of a dangerously misguided experiment, and law-abiding Americans are paying the price.

Here in the Senate, Republicans have been focused all along on making American communities actually safer. It is why we supported TIM SCOTT's efforts to pass police reform that empowered law enforcement to do their jobs very well rather than federalizing and defunding the police.

It is the reason that Chairman LINDSEY GRAHAM and 46 other Republican Senators joined me today to demand publicly that the Department of Justice cease its efforts to restrict the

use of common pistol-brace devices by lawful gun owners. We are talking about a plan that would turn millions of law-abiding Americans into criminals with a stroke of the pen. It would be an outrageous violation, and we expect DOJ to withdraw this attempted confiscation. Federal law enforcement should focus on the criminals committing violent crimes in American cities, not on law-abiding gun owners.

So Republicans will continue to stand for Americans' Second Amendment rights, as a matter of public safety and of basic freedoms.

#### DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, as the Senate headed into the June work period, the Democratic leader laid out an agenda that was transparently designed to fail, a string of far-left proposals that were not intended to become law or to make a difference in the lives of the American people. They were designed to fail and provide political theater for liberal activists.

And sure enough, the Senate did reject Democrats' brazen attempt to rewrite the rules of American elections, permanently, to their own advantage. We did reject their bid to exploit the cause of paycheck fairness to fill the pockets of the trial bar. And other radical proposals, like the one to impose crushing legal penalties on organizations that failed to conform to leftwing social preferences, didn't make it to the floor.

But, let's remember, this was never just about policy. If our colleagues actually believed that the substance of their plans were viable, they would have submitted more to scrutiny in committee. We know how things work in this body when a narrow majority actually wants to make a law. That is not what we have actually seen.

So Senate Democrats weren't out to pass any legislation this month. Their designed-to-fail agenda was supposed to indicate that the institution of the Senate itself was somehow broken. And on this count, our friends across the aisle failed spectacularly.

See, the Framers designed the upper Chamber, our Chamber, to be a proving ground, a place where good ideas would rise to meet high standards and bad ones would actually fall flat. So this month our Senate colleagues proved that the Senate is working quite well.

We turned away an underhanded attempt to open American employers to a new form of unlimited predatory liability and a hostile takeover of our election system. And the whole time, productive work continued on bipartisan proposals that are actually—actually—intended to become law. From infrastructure to agriculture, many of our colleagues have been hard at work demonstrating the right way to go about legislating. In the Commerce and EPW Committees, they approved smart legislation with wide bipartisan votes.

This morning on the floor, we considered another bill from Senator BRAUN that more than half of our colleagues actually cosponsored.

So as we head back to our home States and take time to celebrate our Nation's founding, let's double down on efforts like these and leave designed-to-fail partisan antics in June.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on one final matter, earlier today, a bipartisan group of infrastructure negotiators took the results of their efforts down to President Biden. It was an encouraging sign of progress after leading Democrats had gone out of their way to slow the process.

Remember, at the first sign of an agreement last night and then again this morning, both the Democratic leader and the Speaker of the House made it clear they would hold a bipartisan agreement hostage, demanding trillions of dollars in wasteful spending and job-killing tax increases in return for even considering it. The top two Democrats literally pulled the rug out from under their bipartisan negotiators with these unserious demands before they had even made it down to the White House.

So President Biden's show of support earlier today appeared to be a major breakthrough for earning Democrats' support, but, alas, that optimism was short-lived. Less than 2 hours after publicly commending our colleagues and actually endorsing the bipartisan agreement, the President took the extraordinary step of threatening to veto it. It was a tale of two press conferences—endorse the agreement in one breath and threaten to veto it in the next. Less than 2 hours. It almost makes your head spin. Less than 2 hours. As I said, it almost makes your head spin—an expression of bipartisanship and then an ultimatum on behalf of your leftwing base.

I have no doubt the President is under enormous pressure from some on the left to deliver on a laundry list of radical climate demands. The Democratic leader and the Speaker have already made clear they will do whatever it takes to keep their runaway spending train chugging along all summer, and more and more Members of their party are having to contort their positions to keep pace with the expectations of the Green New Deal fringe. But, really, caving completely in less than 2 hours? That is not the way to show you are serious about getting a bipartisan outcome.

So, look, I hope our colleagues can recover and get their good-faith efforts back on track.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip is recognized.

#### GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this week marked the official start of summer, and by all means, it should be a

season of renewal in our Nation. But as we begin to emerge from this public health crisis of COVID-19, we find ourselves facing another crisis: an epidemic of gun violence in America.

The gun violence we are seeing in America today is devastating, and it is the direct result of generations of underinvestment, policy failure, and cycles of trauma.

Yesterday, President Biden spoke to the Nation about this challenge and laid out a clear strategy to keep our communities safe from the scourge of gun violence. The President has called for important reforms to crack down on gun trafficking and gun dealers who willfully violate the law. I agree with this strategy, and I will do everything in my power as chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee to support it.

Already, the administration has worked to rein in the proliferation of untraceable ghost guns. What are these guns? They are guns that can be ordered on the internet. They can be made in component parts with no serial numbers and are impossible to trace. The administration has also worked to issue regular reports on firearms trafficking patterns and trends and to promote model legislation to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

These are all important steps, and so is the President's call for a major commitment of Federal resources to support community violence intervention programs, programs like READI Chicago, which supports members of the community who are most at risk for gun violence with job training and other support. These programs help save lives in our city of Chicago, and they desperately need Federal support. President Biden made it clear yesterday that he is committed to this.

Every Monday, as sad as it is, the people of Chicago awaken to read the heartbreaking headlines about the toll gun violence has taken over the weekend. What was last weekend like in the city of Chicago? Fifty-two people were shot, five fatally.

Young children and babies don't escape this violence. More than 50 children under the age of 15 have been shot in Chicago this year: Kayden Swann, 1-year-old, shot in the head while riding in a car on Lake Shore Drive; 7-year-old Jaslyn Adams was shot and killed at a McDonald's drive-through on the West Side in April; 14-year-old Savanna Quintero, who was shot and killed earlier this month by gang members in the Back of the Yards neighborhood. These children are just a few of the more than 1,500 people who have been shot in Chicago this year.

Our city isn't alone in facing gun violence. We are seeing it across the Nation. And don't believe it is just a problem in blue States; red States face it too.

While a shooting can happen anywhere, the fact is gun violence has disproportionately claimed the lives of Black and Brown Americans living in communities where it is often easier to find a gun than a good-paying job.

I have visited schools across Chicago, and I have asked the students if they know someone who has been shot. In some neighborhoods, nearly every child's hand goes up. In fact, 90 percent of Chicago's homicides occur in neighborhoods where 60 percent of the city's youngest kids live and learn. And when their parents or siblings are shot, it causes damage that, unlike a bullet wound, cannot heal with time alone. Science shows us that trauma rewires children's brains and produces changes that can last a lifetime.

I often ask audiences: Think about your youth. Think about one event in your life that you still remember to this day. I hope it was a happy one. I hope it wasn't a sad one. But think about the fact that no matter how old you are, something that happened when you were a tiny kid is still very fresh in your memory.

Now think about a child who has witnessed a shooting or been the victim of a shooting. That is going to be with them for a lifetime unless we do something. Childhood trauma can make it harder for kids to learn and to form healthy relationships, and it can do serious harm to a child physically, mentally, and emotionally—harm that can change their lives.

But with the right care and support, kids and victims of gun violence can deal with trauma and rise above it. Across Illinois, I have seen programs in schools, hospitals, community centers, and churches that provide the nurturing environments and treatments our children who experience trauma need to thrive.

If we want to end the epidemic of gun violence, we need to invest in community-based solutions that end the cycles of trauma. Last week I joined Senators CAPITO, DUCKWORTH, and MURKOWSKI in introducing a bipartisan bill that will invest in those solutions: the RISE from Trauma Act. This bill would invest billions of dollars over the next 8 years in community-based efforts to support children and families who have endured trauma.

This aligns directly with what President Biden said yesterday and what he requested in his American Jobs Plan. It would help end violence where it begins—in environments where kids are neglected, abused, and left to fend for themselves.

This legislation would fund counseling for gunshot victims and expand our trauma-informed workforce—doctors, teachers, social service professionals, community leaders—to help kids who have experienced trauma.

I believe the RISE from Trauma Act will help offer a long-term solution to the epidemic of gun violence, but we also need to protect our families and neighborhoods in the short term.

In addition to immediate steps it has taken, the administration is asking us to address violent crime. I have been working with leaders in my State to make additional resources available. Earlier this week, Senator DUCKWORTH

and I sent a letter to Governor Pritzker highlighting effective strategies for how to use more than \$120 million in American Rescue Plan funds to help support targeted violence intervention efforts. These funds, which will help protect Illinois from violent crimes, are available now to help the police, to help the victims, to help the neighborhoods.

When we talk about really caring and really wanting to do something to make a difference, I am sorry that I have to remind the Senate that this bill, the American Rescue Plan, passed the U.S. Senate without a single Republican supporting it, not one—not one Republican vote.

To most effectively address the spike in gun violence, the Senate must also confirm the Director for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

I couldn't help but listen to the Republican leader who came to the floor to talk about David Chipman. He is a man who will be reported out of the Judiciary Committee and brought to the floor. He was considered today, in the Judiciary Committee—11 Democrats and 11 Republicans split along party lines on his vote. It was expected. But Senator SCHUMER can still bring his nomination to the floor.

It is no surprise that the Republicans opposed him, but let's put it in context for a moment. How many times have you heard a gun debate and you heard someone say, "We don't need any new laws, we just need to enforce the laws we have. Don't dream up some new law that's going to burden someone who is an innocent, law-abiding gun owner, enforce the laws we have."

So what Agency do we look to for that enforcement? Well, certainly, the Department of Justice. And where do they turn? They turn to ATF. That is the Agency that is supposed to keep an eye on how guns are being sold and whether the wrong people are buying them.

Well, let's look at the leader of the Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Agency under President Trump. I would like to give you his name or her name, but I can't because there was no leader. In 4 years, President Trump and Senate Republicans never put in place any single person to head this Agency. Was it an oversight, an accident? Far from it. Those who are on the side of increased gun rights at the expense of safety don't want anyone to lead this Agency. They want this Agency to go away.

David Chipman, a man with over 20 years' experience in the field, who worked for this law enforcement agency and risked his life in doing so, has been nominated by President Biden to head the Agency. And the Republicans can't stand the idea. The fact that an actual law enforcement agency person who has this experience would lead the Agency just drives them wild to think about it, and they are opposed to it.

Yes, it is true, he is for gun safety, and he has made it clear.

Let me tell you about a couple of radical ideas he had. He believes that we should keep guns out of the hands of felons and people who are mentally unable. Well, there is a radical idea when it comes to gun safety, so radical that 84 percent of the American people—some say 90 percent of the American people, including a majority of gun owners—support this idea, and so does Mr. Chipman. That makes him a radical in the eyes of some of our colleagues. To me, he is as mainstream as they come.

When it comes to assault weapons, for example, he believes there are some guns that really have no place in the ordinary self-defense, sporting, and hunting world and can only be used as machines for killing. Over half the American people happen to agree with him. I do too. For that reason, many Republicans oppose him. They say, "He's a radical, he's a zealot." I have heard all these words.

He is a man who has lived his life through the ATF for more than 20 years. He has the support of law enforcement and deserves a chance to lead this Agency.

These ideas that he has—wouldn't it be wonderful if the U.S. Senate—think about that—the U.S. Senate could pass legislation to require background checks to keep guns out of the hands of convicted felons? The American people want it. We can't touch it.

You ask people on the committee, on the Republican side: Well, what should we do about gun violence? They have got an answer. What is their answer? We need more guns in America. We need more people carrying guns in America. Two or three of the members of the committee today on the Republican side, Senate Judiciary Committee, were proud to speak about this issue of concealed carry. One actually said she carries a gun. I don't know if she does it in the Capitol Building. That is her business. But that is how far it has come, this notion that the solution to gun violence is more guns when 109 people a day are dying in America from gun violence. This isn't happening in other nations around the world. We are unique, and we should be embarrassed by this unique situation that we have so much gun violence and gun death in America.

President Biden made it clear yesterday as well that this notion that he is for defunding the police is ludicrous. He called yesterday for billions of dollars to our police to do their job more effectively, and I support it. I want to make sure that the police who receive these funds are well trained and administer justice in a fair way and without the abuses that we have seen with the death of George Floyd and other instances.

Yes, invest in that, but have the wisdom to understand that the police need helping hands as well. The police would gladly give the issue of domestic violence over to social workers and psychologists, who really could get into

this situation and find an effective solution that doesn't risk lives and doesn't endanger the lives of the police. They need a helping hand, and we should give it to them.

When it comes to law and order, I hear the Republican leader come to the floor and talk about the need for law and order, and I can't help but think it was just 2 weeks ago when he was given a chance to support a bipartisan commission to look into the worst lawlessness we have seen in the U.S. Capitol since 1813.

On January 6, 2021, thousands coming from the speech by President Trump formed an insurrectionist mob and descended on this Capitol. I will never forget that day as long as I live, and, yes, we ought to get to the bottom of it. Who financed that? Who planned that? Who was behind that? There are serious questions to be asked and answered. Who stopped the bill with the filibuster for a bipartisan commission asking and answering those questions? The same Senator who was coming here a few minutes ago giving a speech on law and order. It doesn't follow.

If Senator McCONNELL believes we should have law and order, it should start with the Senate Chamber and the Capitol Building. Isn't that our first responsibility as elected Members? Of course it is. What happened January 6 cannot and should not be swept under the rug.

It is interesting to me, as I consider the nominees of the Biden administration and the reaction on the Republican side. Mr. Chipman was the latest victim of their attacks. Some on the political extreme even went so far as to doctor films so that it reflected the presence of Mr. Chipman at events he didn't even attend, events he had no business with as a member of ATF. That is the extent they will go to undermine the Biden administration's nominees.

And I can't help but notice that when it comes to assertive women of color, that really drives many Republicans to a level of rage. Vanita Gupta. Kristen Clarke. These women are extremely talented, professional women with amazing resumes who are now luckily serving this Nation because of a vote in the Senate, but the opposition to them went way beyond anything that was rational or explainable.

Senator McCONNELL said we shouldn't make ownership of guns more burdensome. I think that is generally right, but if making sure that convicted felons don't own guns is a slight burden on those who are legally entitled to own guns, I think it is not too much to ask.

I am all for people exercising their Second Amendment rights to use guns safely, respectfully, follow the law, and store them, as well, in that same fashion, and to ask them to go through a background check to make sure they are qualified is not too much, and it saves lives in the process.

The gun lobby tries to stop the Senate from confirming the Director of the

ATF, but we are going to move forward and do it. There wasn't a Senate-confirmed Director under President Trump. In fact, there hasn't been one since 2015. This man, Mr. Chipman, is extremely well qualified—25 years of experience. He worked in the field in Virginia, Texas, and Michigan. He knows the Agency inside and out. He is the right person.

Background checks—is that too much to ask? I don't think so. We should pass the bill. In March, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 8, a bipartisan bill to close the gaps in the background checks system. We ought to do the same.

Addressing gun violence is a top priority of the Senate Judiciary Committee. In fact, the committee has already held four hearings on the topic. The first was the day after the mass shooting—the most recent mass shooting in Boulder, CO, that left 10 people dead. Sadly, unimaginably—listen to this number, Mr. President—that was just one of 299 mass shootings in America so far this year. That is more than one mass shooting every single day. What is going on? How can we tolerate that situation in our country?

Yet, during the first hearing on gun violence in our committee, one of the Republican members of the committee described the hearing as "ridiculous theater." Ridiculous theater. Do you want to know what ridiculous theater really looks like? It is filibustering a piece of gun safety reform like universal background checks supported by 90 percent of the people. It is calling for an enforcement of gun laws already on the books and blocking anyone from being confirmed who will do it. Ridiculous theater is tweeting slogans in response to a spike in gun violence rather than coming up with solutions.

The Presiding Officer knows as well as I do and maybe even better that there have been too many funerals, too many lives lost to the scourge of gun violence. Can we get serious for one moment on a bipartisan basis and dedicate ourselves to reducing gun violence and saving lives in America? We have a President who is ready to lead us in that direction. I hope my other colleagues on the other side of the aisle will join Democrats in enacting legislation to keep America safe.

I yield the floor.

#### REMEMBERING FATHER RAY DOHERTY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, there are some people who leave an indelible mark on your life, from the moment you meet them. On June 7, the Saint Michael's College community lost one such person with the passing of Father Raymond Doherty. As an alumnus of Saint Michael's College, I was shaped by the academic experience and lasting tight-knit community that a small college provides and will always feel a deep connection to the school. As a fellow alumnus, Father Doherty was a